

SHOPPING

Within a regional hierarchy of town centres Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe are district centres providing everyday goods and services for major parts of the Borough. They have the largest shop sales area (18,500 sq.m. and 17,000 sq.m. respectively), with a range of size and type of shops to serve most of the needs of people in the Borough. The neighbouring major centres of Durham, Darlington and Bishop Auckland provide a wider scope of shopping opportunities, each with larger total sales area, while Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Gateshead Metro Centre and Sunderland operate as regional shopping centres.

Within the Borough the town centres of Shildon and Ferryhill offer a narrower range of convenience and comparison shopping than Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe. However their other activities such as offices, libraries and meeting places also contribute to their social and economic vitality and viability.

Local centres provide a range of shops and services for meeting the daily needs of residents in housing areas of the towns and larger villages.

National and regional planning guidance emphasises the importance of encouraging new shopping development to locate in town centres so as to maintain their vitality and viability, as well as ensuring accessibility to shops and other services is maintained, particularly for those reliant on public transport. This approach recognises the important social as well as economic functions of town centres, and also assists the regeneration of urban areas, reducing the need to travel and protecting the countryside.

The approved County Structure Plan seeks to provide the best range of opportunities for residents of the County through maintaining and improving the existing town centres, including Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe and encouraging new development to locate there. With a static population in the County the intention is to avoid losses of trade from existing major and local shopping centres, and to continue to improve them.

Local Plan Shopping Strategy

The Local Plan's strategy reflects national and regional planning advice and that of the County Structure Plan by seeking to encourage development in the Borough's towns which provide the widest range of opportunities. This will support economic activity, improve the environmental appearance of centres and facilitate the use of public transport. The Council wishes to support new development in town centres and will continue to carry out environmental improvement schemes. Developments other than shops, such as leisure, recreation, offices and housing, will be encouraged to be located in town and local centres as the activities help to support the investment and infrastructure of these centres.

Newton Aycliffe was developed as a New Town and the town centre is pedestrianised with rear servicing and car parks. There will be an opportunity to develop The Avenue School site in a comprehensive scheme linking the existing centre with new retail development. This will help to maintain the viability of this centre in relation to towns outside the Borough.

Spennymoor and Ferryhill have benefited from recent environmental improvement schemes. The Council is preparing a scheme to improve conditions for people living and working in or visiting Shildon town centre.

It is also important that the range of services provided in shopping centres and villages is maintained and is easily accessible by all.

The shopping policies of the Plan are aimed at encouraging the maintenance of centres that are attractive, safe and convenient. The Plan will encourage investment that helps to:-

- promote and protect the vitality and viability of the town centres of Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor, Shildon and Ferryhill;
- maintain local shopping centres;
- improve conditions for people using the centres in terms of layout, convenience, movement and standard of design and landscaping;
- make provision for a good standard of accessibility in terms of public transport, car parking and footpaths;
- encourage development of vacant sites.

Town Centre Developments

POLICY S1 THE ROLE OF THE BOROUGH'S TOWN CENTRES IN NEWTON AYCLIFFE, SPENNYMOOR, FERRYHILL AND SHILDON AS DISTRICT SHOPPING CENTRES, WILL BE PROMOTED AND PROTECTED.

MEASURES TO ACHIEVE THIS WILL INCLUDE:-

- (A) GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION FOR FURTHER SHOPPING, OFFICE, LEISURE, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE WITHIN OR ON THE EDGE OF THE TOWN CENTRE; AND**
- (B) GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION THAT LEADS TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF TOWN CENTRES THROUGH THE REDEVELOPMENT, CONVERSION OR MODERNISATION OF BUILDINGS, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO ACCESS, TRAFFIC CIRCULATION, PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKING ARRANGEMENTS.**

THE TOWN CENTRES OF NEWTON AYCLIFFE AND SPENNYMOOR WILL PROVIDE THE MAIN LOCATIONS FOR MAJOR RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS.

Reasons for the policy

The Borough's town centres are Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor, Shildon and Ferryhill. They have a variety of shops, both for everyday food shopping and shopping around for other goods and services.

The urban concentration strategy of the Plan means that most people living in the Borough are close to the nearest shopping centre. Concentrating new shops in or on the edge of existing town centres will help the regeneration of these towns and ensure that the countryside is protected from unnecessary development.

The vitality of these town centres depends on their diversity and activity. They each have a weekly market and as well as shops, town centres are also important as places of work (in shops, offices and leisure); as centres for the community (libraries, post offices, job centres); local government offices; and places to meet and spend leisure time.

It is also important that town centres are well-maintained in order to keep them attractive, safe and successful.

Improving the appearance of town centres will help to attract shoppers and other visitors. New development should therefore make a positive contribution to the centre and the Borough overall.

Development and redevelopment opportunities and environmental improvements will help the Borough's centres to compete with other centres. The appropriate scale of development relates to the size of the existing centres: in Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor a larger scale of development can take place than in the smaller town centres of Ferryhill and Shildon.

None of the centres in the Borough is of the scale to compete with the higher order centres of Darlington, Durham or Bishop Auckland within the County or with regional centres in Teesside, Wearside and Tyneside

The Borough's town centres are accessible to all sections of the community, including those using public transport and private cars. New shops help them to remain attractive and viable.

There are potential development sites in Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor and Policies S4 and S5 put forward proposals for their development which will increase the attraction of the centres to the benefit of those using them.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Environmental improvement programmes have already taken place in Ferryhill and Spennymoor which have improved the layout of bus stops and car parking, provided space for the markets and landscape features including new paving and trees. A scheme for environmental improvements in Shildon town centre is being prepared by the Council, in consultation with the Town Council.

In Newton Aycliffe town centre the opportunity to enhance the existing centre is created by the availability of The Avenue School site which is dealt with in Policy S4.

Making sites available.

POLICY S2 IN THE BOROUGH'S TOWN CENTRES PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR THE FOLLOWING USES:-

**SHOPS, ANY SIZE;
OFFICES;
FOOD AND DRINK OUTLETS;
BUSINESS;
HOTELS AND HOSTELS;
COMMUNITY FACILITIES;
LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES, INCLUDING OPEN SPACE;
LAUNDERETTES AND DRY CLEANERS;
CAR PARKS; AND
PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES.**

THE FOLLOWING USES MAY BE GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSION IN THE BOROUGH'S TOWN CENTRES PROVIDED THEY ARE NOT DETRIMENTAL TO THE MAIN SHOPPING FUNCTION OF THE TOWN CENTRE:-

**AMUSEMENT CENTRES;
RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS;
HOUSES AND FLATS;
CAR SHOWROOMS;
PETROL FILLING STATIONS;
TAXI AND VEHICLE HIRE BUSINESS; AND
WAREHOUSES.**

THE FOLLOWING USE WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSION IN THE BOROUGH'S TOWN CENTRES:-**GENERAL INDUSTRY****Reasons for the policy**

Shops are the key part of shopping centres and give them much of their vitality. Other uses such as banks and building societies provide useful facilities that complement the shopping function of these centres. Cafés and take-aways also provide facilities that are welcomed by people shopping or working in the centre. These uses should not, however, dominate the shopping role of the centre.

Community facilities include doctors' surgeries, leisure and recreation uses. They generally provide a service to people every week day and can be visited as part of a shopping trip or provide local amenities that are accessible to all.

Business uses can be conveniently located in shopping centres because they are well-served by public transport and other facilities in the centre. There are opportunities for new business development in Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor (see Policies S4 and S5).

Shopping centres can be suitable places for people to live. Residents living in the centre can help to make them lively and attractive places.

Amusement centres can be appropriately sited in the Borough's town centres where there is a mixture of commercial and retail uses. Account will be taken of the likely impact on the neighbouring areas of the town centre in terms of amenity, including noise and general disturbance. These matters are, however, relevant only in so far as they affect proper planning considerations.

Car-related uses (petrol filling stations, car showrooms etc.) are acceptable if they can be accommodated without adverse effects. They are best located on the edge of shopping centres where they are likely to cause fewer problems for pedestrians.

The uses listed as unacceptable are not compatible with the town centres' shopping functions and would harm the environment of people who shop, work or live there or nearby. The Plan's proposed locations for industry and warehousing are set out in Policies IB5, IB6, IB7.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Providing appropriate advice to developers.

POLICY S3 PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOROUGH'S TOWN CENTRES SHOULD NORMALLY:-

- (A) **BE WELL-RELATED TO THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ROAD NETWORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY T7;**
- (B) **MEET THE COUNCIL'S OPERATIONAL CAR PARKING STANDARDS AS SET OUT IN POLICY D3; AND**

(C) PROVIDE VISITOR CAR PARKING AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC OR CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE FUNDING OF SUCH PARKING.

Reasons for the policy

All development proposals must take account of the policies contained in the Design chapter which cover aspects of design, layout, landscaping and access.

The town centres are prominent in the Borough and it is particularly important that new development is sensitively and attractively designed.

Shopping trips are often difficult for the disabled, the elderly and parents with young children because of steps, narrow entrances and obstructed floorspace. All shoppers, including those with restricted mobility, should be able to move around shopping centres in safety and comfort to meet the requirements of Policy D2.

Town centres attract traffic: delivery vehicles, cars and public transport for those working and visiting the shops, offices and other facilities. Vehicles need to be kept separate from pedestrians, and delivery vehicles should be separated from cars and buses. The size and quantity of traffic attracted to town centres makes it essential that the centres are well served by public transport and the local road network.

The Council's car parking standards are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 6.

Some parking space is required adjacent to shops, offices and other buildings in town centres to allow for servicing, for example by delivery vehicles. This is the essential, operational parking which must be provided for new development in a safe and convenient way in accordance with Policy D3.

In the Borough's town centres there is free public car parking for visitors to the shops and offices and for people working there. This is termed non-operational parking. This parking should be maintained so as to continue to attract shoppers and visitors to the town centres. New development may be of a scale to be able to provide non-operational parking within the site in which case it should be freely available to the public. It may, however, be safer, more convenient and efficient for car parks to be provided in one or two locations rather than by individual developments in different parts of the town centre. In this case the developer will be required to make a financial contribution to centrally provided parking spaces through a planning agreement. Where commuted payments are made, the corresponding parking will be provided at an early opportunity and its location notified to the body paying for the spaces.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Providing appropriate advice to developers.

POLICY S4 THE COUNCIL IN CONSIDERING THE FUTURE USE OF THE AVENUE SCHOOL SITE, NEWTON AYCLIFFE, WILL REQUIRE ANY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO:-

(A) BE INTEGRATED INTO THE EXISTING TOWN CENTRE;

- (B) PROVIDE FOR A MIXED DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT WHICH STRENGTHENS THE OVERALL VITALITY, VIABILITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE TOWN CENTRE;**
- (C) INCLUDE CAR PARKING, AMENITY OPEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES; AND**
- (D) BE SECURED THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING SCHEME FOR THE SITE.**

OTHER TOWN CENTRE USES AS SET OUT IN POLICY S2 MAY BE ACCEPTABLE AS PART OF THE MIXED DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE.

Reasons for the policy

The former Avenue School site and its playing fields are surplus to the County Council's requirements. The availability of the site provides an opportunity to enhance the vitality and viability of Newton Aycliffe town centre by extending the range of shopping and other town centre activities available to the local community.

The part of the former school site adjacent to the present town centre would be particularly suitable to accommodate a food supermarket that will help Newton Aycliffe compete with other town centres in the southern part of the County.

The development of the site as proposed accords with the Local Plan strategy to promote and facilitate development opportunities for employment, housing, shopping, commerce and leisure in the Borough and to direct new investment to areas where the greatest benefit will be achieved. It is, however, essential that the redevelopment scheme integrates the existing centre with the new development by, for example, improving pedestrian links from the new site to the existing centre to enable single multi-purpose shopping trips to take place. Additionally the use of the site should help to create an attractive environment and approach to the town centre by the appropriate use of open space and in the design of the new buildings.

The redevelopment scheme should help to revitalise the existing town centre by attracting more shoppers and other visitors to Newton Aycliffe who at present are attracted to other shopping centres. The increase in vitality will improve the viability of the town centre and lead to a greater demand for shopping floorspace and fewer vacant shops.

Furthermore, development of the site should include the opportunity to provide additional car parking for the use of the town centre as a whole (in accordance with Policy S3(C)).

The existing community and leisure uses will need to be replaced or retained on this site which is well situated because of its central position and good access by public transport. The site is well located for additional community facilities which will help to promote Newton Aycliffe as a major centre.

Other suitable town centre uses including offices are listed in Policy S2.

How it will be put into practice

The site will be the subject of a planning brief which will ensure that the development maximises the potential of the site, is of a high standard and includes town centre uses that ensure that Newton Aycliffe as a centre remains viable and attractive. The brief will be the

subject of consultation with Durham County Council as landowner, Great Aycliffe Town Council and residents of Newton Aycliffe.

Deciding planning applications.

POLICY S5 DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREAS SOUTH OF THE HIGH STREET, SPENNYMOOR, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, FOR APPROPRIATE TOWN CENTRE USES IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY S2, WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED.

Reasons for the policy

There are a number of sites to the rear of the High Street, Spennymoor that have been cleared. They offer opportunities for development which would add to the attraction of the town centre and make use of unused land.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Continuing promotion and investment by Sedgefield Borough Council.

Providing appropriate advice to developers.

Local Centres

POLICY S6 IN THE BOROUGH'S LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR SHOPPING.

THE FOLLOWING USES MAY ALSO BE GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSION PROVIDED THEY WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE SHOPPING FUNCTION OF THE CENTRE OR TO THE CHARACTER OF SURROUNDING AREAS IN TERMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL OR TRAFFIC CONDITIONS, CONTRARY TO POLICY T7:-

**OFFICES;
FOOD AND DRINK OUTLETS;
BUSINESS;
HOTELS AND HOSTELS;
RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS;
HOUSES AND FLATS;
COMMUNITY FACILITIES;
LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES;
LAUNDERETTES AND DRY CLEANERS;
PETROL FILLING STATIONS; AND
TAXI AND VEHICLE HIRE BUSINESS.**

THE FOLLOWING USES WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSION IN THE BOROUGH'S LOCAL CENTRES:-

**GENERAL INDUSTRY; AND
WAREHOUSES.**

Reasons for the policy

Local shopping centres are centres containing four or more, small to medium sized shops (about 1,000 sq.m. floorspace), which serve the everyday shopping needs of a neighbourhood. They are located in villages and in housing areas such as Woodham in Newton Aycliffe and The Broom, Ferryhill.

Local centres are important for those living nearby with limited mobility and the Council will encourage a variety of shops to open and remain in such locations. Local centres may be required to be developed as part of new residential development.

Some of the other uses acceptable in the Borough's town centres are for the same reasons, acceptable in the local centres (see Policy S2). Local shopping centres are usually surrounded by residential areas, therefore applications will only be allowed if they do not cause a nuisance or adversely affect the character of the neighbouring area.

The uses listed as unacceptable are not compatible with the Borough's local centres shopping functions and would harm the environment of people who shop, work and live there or nearby. The Plan's proposed locations for industry and warehousing are set out in Policies IB5, IB6 and IB7.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Providing appropriate advice to developers.

POLICY S7 NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE BOROUGH'S LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES NORMALLY MUST EITHER:-

- (A) PROVIDE SUFFICIENT OFF-STREET PARKING TO MEET VISITOR PARKING REQUIREMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY D3; OR**
- (B) CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY TOWARDS THE PROVISION OF CENTRALISED PARKING FACILITIES.**

Reasons for the policy

Parking provision should meet the needs of commerce and the public without causing harm to the environment or safety of other road users. Where car parking associated with small developments may create an unsatisfactory layout in a local centre, the alternative of a centralised car park, jointly paid for by the developers, could provide a satisfactory solution. Where commuted payments are made, the corresponding parking will be provided at an early opportunity and their location notified to the body paying for the spaces.

Visitor car parking standards are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 6.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

POLICY S8 LAND IS ALLOCATED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CENTRES AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AT COBBLERS HALL, NEWTON AYCLIFFE AND BYERLEY ROAD/ALMA ROAD, SHILDON. LOCAL CENTRE USES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY S6 WILL NORMALLY BE APPROVED AT THESE LOCATIONS.

Reasons for the policy

A new village centre at Cobblers Hall is planned to serve the local shopping needs of the residents of the Cobblers Hall development of around 800 houses presently under construction in the northern part of Newton Aycliffe.

The New Shildon area of Shildon generally lacks shops and is relatively distant from the town centre. A site for a food supermarket of up to 1,000 sq.m. floorspace is therefore proposed as part of the redevelopment of the Alma Road area. Development of this site is dependent on completion of the Byerley Road/Station Road Link as set out in Policy T7.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Releasing Council owned land at Cobblers Hall, Newton Aycliffe and Alma Road, Shildon.

Individual Shops

POLICY S9 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SMALL INDIVIDUAL SHOP OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH'S TOWN AND LOCAL CENTRES BUT WITHIN TOWNS AND VILLAGES WILL NORMALLY BE APPROVED PROVIDED:-

- (A) IT WOULD NOT HAVE AN UNACCEPTABLE EFFECT ON THE AMENITY OF THE LOCAL AREA;**
- (B) IT WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE SAFETY OR EASE OF MOVEMENT OF PEDESTRIANS OR OTHER ROAD USERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY T7;**
- (C) IT WOULD NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE ACCESSIBILITY OF LOCAL SHOPS AND SERVICES TO THE LESS MOBILE MEMBERS OF A COMMUNITY; AND**
- (D) IT WOULD NOT BE LOCATED WITHIN A BUSINESS OR INDUSTRIAL AREA.**

Reasons for the policy

Small local shops of up to 200 sq.m. floorspace can provide for day to day needs, particularly for those who cannot walk far or do not have the use of a car.

Shops over 200 sq.m. floorspace are to be located in town and local centres because they serve more than a local need.

Policy IB7 deals with small shops in prestige business areas and general industrial areas. Because these outlets will cater primarily for people working on the industrial area such developments should be of a smaller scale, normally less than 100 square metres.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Town and Local Centre Improvements

POLICY S10 THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF TOWN AND LOCAL CENTRES WILL BE ENHANCED WHERE NECESSARY. PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE APPROVED FOR MEASURES THAT WILL:-

- (A) **CREATE NEW OR ENHANCED PEDESTRIAN AREAS;**
- (B) **IMPROVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT;**
- (C) **IMPROVE CAR PARKS;**
- (D) **IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND WITHIN THE CENTRES FOR PEOPLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY D2; AND**
- (E) **INCREASE REAR SERVICING TO PROPERTIES, AS APPROPRIATE.**

Reasons for the policy

Physical and environmental improvements encourage safer and cleaner town and local centres. They should also take into account the needs of all the people who use these centres. Promotional activities can further help to attract more customers. All these can increase a shopping centre's viability and attractiveness.

Pedestrian areas are safer and more pleasant for people visiting shops and other facilities. If streets are pedestrianised it is still important that buses should be able to get close to shops. People who use buses need to be catered for by providing safe and sheltered places to wait.

Schemes have been implemented to improve the environment of Spennymoor and Ferryhill town centres. The Council's next priority is to examine proposals for Shildon.

Factors that should be taken into account in the layout and design of pedestrian areas and public spaces as set out in Policy D6.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Negotiating with statutory undertakers to co-ordinate their infrastructure programmes.

Negotiating with developers to provide facilities wherever possible.

Continuing the Council's schemes of environmental improvements in town and local centres.

Out of Centre Retail Development

POLICY S11 PLANNING PERMISSION FOR LARGE FOOD RETAIL UNITS OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH'S FOUR TOWN CENTRES WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED UNLESS:-

- (A) THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE SUITABLE SITE IN THE TOWN CENTRE;**
- (B) THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT AFFECT THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE TOWN CENTRES, WHEN TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THE EFFECTS OF OTHER RECENT OR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT;**
- (C) THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A RECENT PLANNING PERMISSION;**
- (D) THE LOCAL HIGHWAY NETWORK IS CAPABLE OF ACCEPTING THE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY T7 AND ANY REQUIRED IMPROVEMENTS WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE ENVIRONMENT OR RESIDENTIAL AMENITY;**
- (E) CAR PARKING IS PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY D3;**
- (F) IT IS CLOSE TO A SUBSTANTIAL AREA OF EXISTING OR PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FROM WHICH GOOD PEDESTRIAN AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESS EITHER IS OR CAN BE PROVIDED; AND**
- (G) IT WOULD NOT SIGNIFICANTLY HARM LIVING CONDITIONS FOR NEARBY RESIDENTS OR HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE LOCAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA.**

A PERMISSION GRANTED MAY BE SUBJECT TO A CONDITION LIMITING THE RANGE OF GOODS SOLD, TO ENSURE THAT THE REQUIREMENTS SET OUT IN THE POLICY ARE MET.

Reasons for the policy

Town centre locations are accessible to all sections of the community whereas out-of-centre developments cater primarily for car-borne shoppers. The Council will therefore normally encourage shopping development in or on the edge of town centres which are the best locations for shoppers and others in terms of providing a wide range of uses and having good access by public transport, on foot or by cycle. It will therefore only be in exceptional cases that the Council will allow major food stores outside the Borough's town centres.

New development in town and local centres helps them to remain attractive and viable.

Proposed major food stores, of over 1,000 sq.m. sales area in existing centres will be encouraged before allowing competing development in other locations which would result in the planning permission not being implemented.

Major retail development generates traffic which must be safely routed in relation to other road users and not cause harm to residential areas. Car parking must also be provided to meet the operational and non-operational needs of the development and should be well-landscaped so as to integrate into the neighbourhood.

As well as additional traffic, environmental problems include visual intrusion and general disturbance such as noise and litter.

Large food stores can attract car-borne customers from a wide catchment area and have a higher turnover compared with other stores. They therefore have a greater effect on the viability of nearby town centres and require higher standards of car parking. Permission for large food stores may be subject to planning conditions to restrict the introduction of non-food retailing where this might lead to an undermining of the vitality and viability of a nearby town centre, contrary to Policy S12.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Providing appropriate advice to developers.

Using planning conditions to limit the store to food retailing.

POLICY S12 RETAIL WAREHOUSES WILL NORMALLY BE ACCEPTABLE IN THE BUILT UP AREAS OF NEWTON AYCLIFFE, SPENNYMOOR, FERRYHILL AND SHILDON, OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTRES, AND WITHIN THE BUILT UP AREAS OF VILLAGES LISTED IN POLICY H8 PROVIDED THAT:-

- (A) THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE SUITABLE SITE IN THE TOWN CENTRE;**
- (B) THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT AFFECT THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE TOWN CENTRES, WHEN TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THE EFFECTS OF OTHER RECENT OR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT;**
- (C) THE SITE IS CAPABLE OF BEING SERVED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT;**
- (D) CAR PARKING IS PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY D3;
AND**
- (E) THE PROPOSAL WILL HAVE NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON NEARBY RESIDENTIAL AREAS.**

A PERMISSION GRANTED MAY BE SUBJECT TO A CONDITION LIMITING THE RANGE OF GOODS SOLD, TO ENSURE THAT THE REQUIREMENTS SET OUT IN THIS POLICY ARE MET.

Reasons for the policy

'Retail warehouses' are large, usually single storey shops with over 1,000 sq.m. sales area, with on-site customer car park and specialising in the sale of household goods (such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods) and bulky DIY items, catering mainly for car-borne customers.

Retail warehouses are best located in town centres which are accessible for those travelling by public transport or car. However, carefully planned out-of-centre retail warehouses improve choice as they sell a range of goods with good access for car-borne customers.

Sites for such development should be located so as to be readily accessible by public transport in order to cater for the public without the use of a car. The type of development is serviced by large delivery vehicles and therefore a good access to the road network is required, in accordance with Policy T7 and Policy D3.

A high standard of layout and design including car parking to meet the Council's standards is required, as contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 6, in order to ensure there is no adverse effect on nearby residential areas in terms of noise, traffic, visual intrusion and general disturbance.

Where planning permission is granted for a retail warehouse development conditions may be imposed to limit the range of goods sold, where the selling of types of products outside of the approved range could undermine the vitality and viability of a nearby town centre, or to ensure the maintenance of satisfactory car parking and access arrangements.

Retail warehouses will not be allowed on Prestige Business Areas for the reasons set out in Policy IB5, and in General Industrial Areas concentration of such uses should not form more than a small part of the total estate area, as set out in Policy IB6.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

Using planning conditions to limit the type of goods sold at the store.

POLICY S13 THE COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY APPROVE PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR RETAIL WAREHOUSING AT COULSON STREET, SPENNYMOOR

Reasons for the policy

The site is located within a general industrial area with access onto the Spennymoor by-pass. The site meets the criteria for these uses under Policies S12 and IB6.

How it will be put into practice

Continuing promotion by the Borough Council.

POLICY S14 PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR GARDEN CENTRES EITHER WITHIN OR ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE BUILT-UP AREA OF A TOWN OR VILLAGE AND PROVIDED THAT:-

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INTRUDE INTO OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OR HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE SETTING OF THE SETTLEMENT; AND**
- (B) THE LOCAL HIGHWAY NETWORK IS CAPABLE OF ACCEPTING THE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY T7 AND ANY REQUIRED IMPROVEMENTS WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE ENVIRONMENT OR LIVING CONDITIONS OF NEARBY RESIDENTS.**

Reasons for the policy

Garden centres that sell produce grown on the site as well as goods grown elsewhere or processed goods may require land for growing, including glasshouses, and therefore need to be on the edge of the built-up area, preferably on unused or derelict land.

Garden centres attract a significant amount of traffic at the weekend and the development should be well designed so that there is no adverse effect on nearby residential areas in terms of noise, traffic, visual intrusion and general disturbance.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

POLICY S15 PLANNING PERMISSION FOR OCCASIONAL MARKETS WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED PROVIDED THAT:-

- (A) THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF A NEARBY TOWN CENTRE;**
- (B) THE LOCAL HIGHWAY NETWORK IS CAPABLE OF ACCEPTING THE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY T7;**
- (C) IT WOULD NOT CAUSE UNACCEPTABLE NUISANCE TO NEIGHBOURING USES;**
- (D) CAR PARKING IS PROVIDED TO MEET THE COUNCIL'S STANDARDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY D3; AND**
- (E) IT WOULD NOT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL OR LIVING CONDITIONS OF NEARBY RESIDENTS.**

Reasons for the policy

Occasional markets (car-boot sales and Sunday markets) can provide a visitor attraction to the Borough and add to choice for shoppers. They can attract large numbers of visitors and their cars. Even though these events are temporary, they need to have good access that prevents problems of congestion, queuing and on-street car parking on the roads nearby. The Design chapter includes policies on access and parking (Policy D3).

Nuisance can also be caused by noise and visual intrusion in an otherwise quiet and attractive locality, to the detriment of adjacent residents.

By attracting large numbers of people these temporary markets could have a detrimental effect on existing shops that provide a continual service. It is therefore important that existing shops do not close due to the economic effects of a temporary market.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.

POLICY S16 THE CHANGE OF USE OF A BUILDING LOCATED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE TO A FARM SHOP WILL NORMALLY BE APPROVED ONLY IF:-

- (A) MAJOR EXTENSIONS OR REBUILDING ARE NOT REQUIRED; AND**
- (B) THE LOCAL HIGHWAY NETWORK IS CAPABLE OF ACCEPTING THE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY T7.**

WHERE THE BUILDING IS OF VISUAL, ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC IMPORTANCE THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT MAKE THE BUILDING WORTHY OF PRESERVATION SHOULD NORMALLY BE RETAINED.

Reasons for the policy

Existing farm buildings can provide opportunities for farm diversification enterprises, including farm shops selling locally produced products attractive to tourists or visitors to the countryside. Such shops may be part of an enterprise such as fruit picking.

This policy does not include farm shops which sell goods produced on that farm as an ancillary use, because they do not require specific planning permission.

A major extension or rebuilding would normally constitute a development of more than 70 sq.m.

The Council wishes to promote the repair and re-use of all buildings that form part of the Borough's heritage or which make a significant contribution to the environment in accordance with Policy E22. Nevertheless, in the case of listed buildings or buildings sited within a conservation area, particular attention needs to be paid to changes affecting their appearance, as set out in Policies E18 and E19 and Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1.

How it will be put into practice

Deciding planning applications.